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Association of Montana Public Health Officials



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SB 2

PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY

Exhibit No. 11

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Bill No. 8B2

A CDC Task Force on Community Preventative Services in 2001 strongly recommended two interventions to reduce dental caries and improved oral health:

- Community water fluoridation
- School-based or school-linked pit and fissure sealant delivery programs.

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5021a1.htm>

Scientific evidence points to benefits of school-based dental services in general, and sealants in particular. According to the CDC Task Force, scientific analysis of school-based dental sealants programs showed the following:

- median 60% decrease in cavities on the top and bottom surfaces of molars and pre-molars among children 6 to 17 years old (interquartile interval: 5% to 93%; 10 studies)
- Applying sealants in school-based or -linked programs was found to be effective among children at different risk of tooth decay and in families of varying economic means.
- Studies compared results from programs where sealants were applied to programs in which no sealants were applied.
- Children were examined for tooth decay from 2 to 5 years after the program.
- Six studies provided information on the economic efficiency of school-based or school-linked programs. Results of the review of these studies are published in Truman BI, Gooch BF, Sulemana I, et al. (2002).

<http://www.thecommunityguide.org/oral/schoolsealants.html>

Finally, there is a human element to this issue. No one should ever forget that lack of adequate dental care can lead to the most serious consequences. In 2007 in Washington DC, 12-year-old Deamonte Driver died from a severe brain infection caused by the bacteria from an infected tooth. Deamonte's death should serve as a reminder that these services are absolutely critical. Deamonte's death spurred leaders in Washington to action, leading to a new mobile dental clinic and school-based programs designed to improve oral health and avoid future tragedies.